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FOR EUR/SCE ENGLISH AND BELL, NEA/I

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TAGS: PREL HR IZ

SUBJECT: CROATIA CONTINUES TO EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR EMBASSY
IN BAGHDAD

REF: ZAGREB 0634

Classified By: DCM Greg Delawie for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) A small Croatian delegation led by Ambassador to Iraq-designate Jerko Vukas and MFA Assistant Minister for Multilateral Affairs Pjer Simunovic will travel to Baghdad in early summer to explore options for a Croatian presence in Iraq, Simunovic told DCM June 9. The Polish embassy in Baghdad has offered logistical support, which will make the trip financially feasible, he said. The delegation hopes to visit with appropriate officials of the new Iraqi government, as well as officials from the U.S. embassy. It is too soon to tell whether Croatia will be able to afford to establish a permanent mission in Iraq, he said, due to the extraordinarily high costs of maintaining sufficient security there; however, the short visit they have in mind will be a good first step. Simunovic said he would advise post of his exact travel plans once they become concrete.

¶2. (SBU) This step comes as the GOC continues to seek ways to contribute to stability in Iraq without using troops. The first anniversary of Croatian participation in the Jordan International Police Training Center is this month. The GOC continues to support this activity with three trainers now in place.

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